

IN THE CLAIMS

1-9. (Canceled)

10. (Withdrawn) A method for tracking purchases of electronic books via a computer, comprising:

receiving a plurality of electronic books at an operations center from a plurality of sources;

formatting the plurality of electronic books into a standard format;

storing the formatted electronic books in a repository at the operations center;

storing identifications for the plurality of electronic books for display on a viewer in a repository accessible by a processor;

associating via the processor each of the electronic books with a source of the electronic book;

providing via a user interface functioning via the processor the electronic books for purchase by subscribers;

recording an indication of purchases of the electronic books in the repository; and

associating via the processor an amount of each purchase with the source for the corresponding electronic book.

11. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10 wherein the associating step includes associating the amount with a publisher for the corresponding electronic book.

12. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10 wherein the providing step includes electronically communicating with a viewer for use in receiving requests to purchase the electronic books.

13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10, further including charging a subscriber account for the purchases.

14. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10, further including generating a bill to one of the subscribers for the purchases.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for providing on-line accounts for purchases of electronic books via a computer, comprising:

storing identifications of a plurality of electronic books on a viewer in a repository accessible by a processor at an operations center;

providing the electronic books for purchase by subscribers at a user interface functioning via the processor;

initializing a plurality of home subsystems to create on-line accounts for a plurality of subscribers, including transferring subscriber information and a billing account to a billing and collection system for each of the subscribers;

maintaining the on-line accounts for the subscribers in the repository;

recording via the processor an indication of purchases of the electronic books in the corresponding accounts;

associating via the processor an amount of each purchase with the source for the corresponding electronic book; and

permitting each of the subscribers to access a corresponding one of the on-line accounts for the subscriber at a user interface functioning via the processor enabling the subscriber to view information about recent orders.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, further including providing on-line access to a customer service representative for the on-line accounts.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the providing step includes electronically communicating with a viewer for use in receiving requests to purchase the electronic books.

18. (Original) The method of claim 15, further including charging one of the accounts for the purchases.

19. (Original) The method of claim 15, further including generating a bill to one of the subscribers for the purchases.

20. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for providing electronic books for purchase, comprising:

an operations center configured to:

receive a plurality of electronic books at an operations center from a plurality of sources;

format the plurality of electronic books into a standard format; and
store the formatted electronic books in a repository at the operations center; and

a billing and collection system for electronically communicating with a viewer for providing electronic books for purchase, wherein the billing and collection system executes a method comprising:

storing identifications of a plurality of electronic books for display on the viewer;

associating each of the electronic books with a source of the electronic book;

providing the electronic books for purchase by subscribers;
recording an indication of purchases of the electronic books; and
associating an amount of each purchase with the source for the corresponding electronic book; and

permitting each of the subscribers to access an on-line account for the subscriber enabling the subscriber to view information about recent orders.

21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the associating step includes associating the amount with a publisher for the corresponding electronic book.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the providing step includes electronically communicating with a viewer for use in receiving requests to purchase the electronic books.

23. (Original) The apparatus of claim 20, further including charging a subscriber account for the purchases

24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 20, further including generating a bill to one of the subscribers for the purchases.

25. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for providing electronic books for purchase comprising:

a billing and collection system for electronically communicating with a viewer for providing electronic books for purchase, wherein the billing and collection system executes a method comprising:

initializing a plurality of home subsystems to create on-line accounts for a plurality of subscribers, including transferring subscriber information and a billing account to a billing and collection system for each of the subscribers;

storing identifications of a plurality of electronic books on a viewer;

providing the electronic books for purchase by subscribers;

maintaining on-line accounts for the subscribers;

recording an indication of purchases of the electronic books in the corresponding accounts;

associating an amount of each purchase with the source for the
corresponding electronic book; and

permitting each of the subscribers to access a corresponding one of the
on-line accounts for the subscriber enabling the subscriber to view information about
recent orders.

26. (Original) The apparatus of claim 25, further including providing on-line access to a
customer service representative for the on-line accounts.

27. (Original) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the providing step includes
electronically communicating with a viewer for use in receiving requests to purchase the
electronic books.

28. (Original) The apparatus of claim 25, further including charging one of the accounts
for the purchases.

29. (Original) The apparatus of claim 25, further including generating a bill to one of the
subscribers for the purchases.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10, further comprising security encoding
plurality of formatted electronic books.

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10, wherein the plurality of electronic books are received from a plurality of sources having different formats of electronic books, and wherein formatting the electronic books includes converting the electronic books to a standard and compressed format.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the plurality of sources include at least one selected from a group consisting of a publisher, a newspaper, and an on-line service.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10, further comprising receiving an indication of purchases of the electronic books via a telephone switching system.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10, further comprising receiving an indication of purchases of the electronic books via a combined cable and telephone switching system.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10, further comprising receiving an indication of purchases of the electronic books via a combined cellular and telephone switching system.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, further comprising security encoding the plurality of formatted electronic books.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of electronic books is received from a plurality of sources having different formats of electronic books, and wherein formatting the electronic books includes converting the electronic books to a standard and a compressed format.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37, wherein the plurality of sources includes at least one selected from a group consisting of a publisher, a newspaper, and an on-line service.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the plurality of sources includes a plurality of publishers.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, further comprising:
 receiving an indication of purchases of the electronic books via a combined cable and telephone switching system.